

I am not able to respond to the specific questions in your letter as the Judicial Greffe is not involved in the conveyancing process prior to the formal passing of contracts before the Royal Court at 2.30 p.m. each Friday afternoon. The Judicial Greffe (in practice the Registrar of Deeds) is responsible for maintaining the Public Registry which records all transactions involving immovable property. Nowadays the records are held on a database known as PRIDE (Public Registry Index & Document Enrolment) system accessible via the internet available for inspection 24/7. On this system all transactions involving land, obligations (borrowings), powers of attorney and caveats (injunctions granted by the court preventing transfer of immovable property) are registered.

Historically the Public Registry records (indices and the contracts themselves) were held in paper-based format (large bound books). The PRIDE system was originally launched in 1995. This involved the computerisation of all the indices of the Public Registry, going back as far as 1800. The user could search the indices on a stand-alone PC but then had to refer to the specific book to view the details. In 2001 PRIDE phase 2 was launched, which involved the scanning/photographing of all the books. The user could search and view the images on a stand-alone PC. In 2006 PRIDE was updated and made available over the internet to all the law firms. The PRIDE system also has a link to a Digimap PRIDE layer where a user can search for properties by map location using the Digimap in addition to other forms of search using name, property description or Unique Property Reference Number. These advances have meant that a title search of a property which used to take a couple of days now can be completed in a couple of hours. In 2014 the input system for PRIDE was upgraded. We now accept certain documents by electronic submission and have speeded up the process for scanning and attaching the images to the index.

The details of the contracts passed before the Royal Court on a Friday (names of contracting parties, Unique Property Reference number, Digimap location etc.) are input onto the system on the following Monday and the image of the contract itself is attached to the by close of business on the Wednesday. Within three working days therefore the full details are available on the PRIDE system.

In November 2006, the use of English in the contracts became mandatory.

Members of the public are able to access the PRIDE system in the Public Registry reading room, the Jersey Archives and the Société Jersiaise.

In role as Registrar Deeds the role over the past 11 years I do not recall any occasions where a contract has been pulled in Court due to 'gazumping'.

I am not aware of any bottleneck to transactions caused by the operation of the Public Registry or the requirement to check title back at least 40 years. I draw your attention to the Law Commission Report entitled "Jersey Law of Real Property" which you may find of general interest and you will note that there was a recommendation that consideration be given to reducing the prescription period to ten years (as that would reduce the number of transactions needed to be checked)